Top Tips for….. collective worship

1. Respect the school

Schools are not churches and we shouldn't treat them like it. Find out what their rules are for safeguarding, health and safety, what is 'normal' for an assembly - and follow them.

2. Collective worship themes

Most schools have a detailed plan for their collective worship, with a theme, often based on school values. It will go a long way to the school trusting you if you ask what those themes are and plan accordingly. It shows that you recognise the school as the most important stakeholder in the relationship.

3. Appropriate language

We want to tell them about God, but we need to do it wisely. We can tell Bible Stories, we can talk about Jesus if we say: "The Bible says….", "Christians believe…."

4. Prayer

Some schools pray in assembly, others don't. Find out what the school you are visiting does and respect it. If you do pray, make it optional and give alternatives.

5. Bible stories

Pick stories that are easy to understand and you can tell them in a way that will have a 'real world' relevance for the children. It is best to avoid stories that will raise lots of questions as you don't have time to answer them! For example, avoid the story of the man who built big barns to keep his money in, then died!

6. Learning Techniques

Avoid making it 15 minutes of your voice. Use as many different communication techniques as you can - drama, music, video (probably only in secondary schools), props. Involve the children as much as possible - volunteers up the front, whole school actions such as making rain sounds.

7. Ask questions

Involve the pupils by asking 'I wonder' questions to help them engage with what you are doing. "I wonder what Jesus was thinking?", or "I wonder which part of this story felt the most important to you?" But remember, there are no wrong answers to wondering questions!

8. Have a plan

Always write a plan of how you want the assembly to go. Make it detailed, read it over many times, then put it to the side to be used as a prompt if you feel you are losing your way. Avoid reading it during the assembly, that looks and sounds boring and stops you from making a connection with the children.

9. Evaluate

Always take time to review what you have done and to use feedback from teachers, pupils when planning the next assembly.

10. Have fun

If you are smiling, it will encourage others.